

Margaret Chase Smith Library 2016 Essay Contest

FIRST-PLACE ESSAY

The Ideal Prospective President

by Elizabeth Harrington

Each year the Margaret Chase Smith Library sponsors an essay contest for high school seniors. As it was a presidential election year, the 2016 essay prompt asked students to reflect on their ideal candidate for president. We are pleased to feature here the top three 2016 prize-winning essays.

With the upcoming presidential election, it is impossible for me to avoid thinking of my own political views and of what I am looking for in a prospective president. As I ponder my vote, I search for a candidate who possesses diplomacy, honesty, fairness, dignity, rationality, respect, and optimism. I search for a candidate who shares my values: a belief in the importance of education, personal and universal liberty, and charity. I believe that the gender, race, ethnicity, and religion of a president do not matter. I want a president who will be remembered for more than just breaking race or gender barriers; I want a president who will be remembered for her words, actions, and accomplishments.

I believe it is essential for a president to be a good diplomat and able to speak to people from all walks of life with ease. This diplomacy should be accompanied by respect. I do not want someone in such a powerful position who cannot respect others because people in other countries will inevitably make judgments about Americans based on our president. I want a president who treats others equally, no matter their financial or social status, ethnicity, race, religion, or culture. I do not want a president who resorts to petty insults or offensive slurs; I want a president who is eloquent and respectful. Human interaction is an art form, and the president should be a master of this art.

Honesty is also paramount for the next president. The people of the United States should be able to trust

their president. I want a president who will confess his mistakes and admit defeat, instead of lying to save his pride. I want a president who knows that the citizens of the country are more important than his legacy, a president who would rather lose his position because of something he did than hide his mistakes from the people. President Abraham Lincoln is sometimes referred to as “Honest Abe,” and I believe all presidents should aspire to nicknames that place their names and the word *honest* in the same set of quotation marks. I want a president who strives to keep his word, but also admits when he fails to do so.

I believe that a president should be fair and just in how she treats others. I want a president who does not feel that she has to garner support dishonestly and who will allow herself to be judged on her own merits. For example, I would not want a prospective president to participate in the act of patronage, bribing the people into voting for her. I also would not want a president who feels she has to insult the other candidates, behavior that only demonstrates insecurity and immaturity. It is important for a prospective president to be fair and just when dealing with the people of the United States. A president should not allow any person unfair advantages. A president should not let personal biases or prejudices influence how she runs the country or how she treats other people.

With such an important position and strong influence, it is essential that a

president is dignified. I want a president who will remain humble in times of victory and proud in adversity. I want a president who, when insulted by another, will simply move on. A president must be calm and composed at all times because the people look up to him for wisdom and guidance. If the people saw the president in a panic, order would be lost and chaos would ensue.

It is extremely important for a president to be able to make rational decisions. I do not want a president who makes a big decision without reflection or lets emotion spur him to do something rash. If a president rushed a decision, it could put the country in danger. I want a president who will consider every option and understand the gravity of the issue before drawing a conclusion. I do not want a president who allows his emotions, whether positive or negative, to drive him to say or do something he, and the whole country, might regret. A president must remember that he is standing in front of an entire nation; he should be able to put his emotions aside for the sake of the country.

In times of great despair such as the Great Depression of the 1930s, the people of the United States look to their president for hope. I believe it is necessary for a president to be able to give the people hope when they need it most. A president should try to remain optimistic, keeping the spirits of the nation high because the nation can never move forward if it is stuck in a state of depression. A president should seek to keep the morale of the country as high as possible as she works to conquer whatever issue the nation is facing.

I want a president who recognizes the role that education plays in the success of the country and strives to improve it, whether through funding, implementing new programs, or supporting students. I want a president

who shares my belief that education is one of the most important aspects of life. I want a president who will encourage education for everyone.

It is important to me that the next president is a supporter of liberty, both personal and universal. I want a president who will seek to improve personal liberty and not hinder it. A president should not allow laws to pass that would limit people of any gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or sexuality. A president should remember that the United States is supposed to be a haven of equality and freedom for everyone, and he should strive to help those who have been denied full liberty in the past. A president should value and encourage every citizen of the nation and recognize the significance and potential that each person holds.

It is important that a president also recognize the power she has to help ensure the liberty of people from other nations. A president should seek to promote liberty around world, whether by sending aid to other countries or welcoming refugees into the safety of the United States. I want a president who will help others, not only because it is kind, but also because it would ensure faithful allies for the country. Liberty is embedded in the foundation of America, so a president should dedicate herself to continuing the tradition of freedom. However, a president should also respect the validity of other cultures.

A president should care about the wellbeing of the people of the nation, so I believe it is important that a president seek to help the less fortunate. A president should make sure that no one has to live on the streets, and he should strive to keep the unemployment rate as low as possible. I want a president who will create programs to help those in need to improve their situation, so they can eventually be independent once again. I want a president who sincerely and genuinely

cares about the people of the United States because if the individuals of a nation are strong, then the country as a whole will be a formidable force.

An election is an opportunity for change and improvement. With a new president, the United States could potentially reach new heights and achieve great things. I hope the next president will bring a new era of positivity, acceptance, and justice to the United States and will make the nation a safe and happy place for all types of people. The next president has the opportunity to continue fundamental and valued traditions in the nation and start new traditions that will make the country a better place for future generations. A president must recognize the gravity of the task and proceed with both caution and confidence. The fate of the nation is in the president's hands. 🐟



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in secondary English education. She sang with the high school chorus and was instrumental in the production of *Seussical the Musical*.